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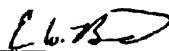
IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Group: 1725
Confirmation No.: 4154
Application No.: 10/077,391
Invention: CASTING STEEL STRIP
Applicant: Nikolovski et al
Filed: February 15, 2002
Attorney
Docket: 29385-69914
Examiner: Tran Len

Certificate Under 37 CFR 1.8(a)

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

on October 14, 2004


(Signature)

Eric W. Beard

(Printed Name)

CONDITIONAL RESPONSE AND PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME

Mail Stop Amendment
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

This conditional response is filed in response to the non-final Office Action of April 14, 2004. This response is conditional since the Examiner stated at the interview on May 21, 2004 that the "rejection is withdrawn." Specifically, the Interview Summary notes that "[a]pplicant's argument regarding to the random dimples is convinced and the non-final rejection is withdrawn."

Since the Examiner found at the interview on May 21, 2004 that the non-final rejection of the Office Action of April 14, 2004 "is withdrawn," a response to the Office Action of April 14, 2004 does not appear necessary or appropriate. Since a response is not necessary or appropriate, a fee for filing this response is not due. However, if a response is deemed necessary, it is respectfully requested that this paper be considered as a Petition for

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an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response and that any fees be charged to the Account of Barnes & Thornburg LLP, Deposit Account No. 10-0435 with reference to file 29385-69914.

No amendment is made to the claims by this response. The pending claims considered at the interview on May 21, 2004 are as follows:

1. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) A method of continuously casting steel strip comprising:
 - (a) providing a chilled casting surface with a texture formed by a random distribution of discrete projections;
 - (b) contracting the chilled casting surface with a casting pool of molten steel having a manganese content of at least 0.55% by weight and a silicon content in the range 0.1 to 0.35% by weight to cause solidification of steel from the casting pool onto the casting surface as a solidified shell; and
 - (c) separating the solid shell from the casting surface in a solidified strip.
2. (ORIGINAL) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the steel has a carbon content of less than 0.07% by weight.
3. (ORIGINAL) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least some of said discrete projections have an average surface distribution of between 5 and 200 peaks per mm².
4. (ORIGINAL) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said discrete projections have an average height of at least 10 microns.
5. (ORIGINAL) A method as claimed in claim 4, wherein the average height of the discrete projections is at least 20 microns.
6. (ORIGINAL) A method as claimed in claim 1, comprising the additional step of the strip moving away from the casting pool at a speed of at least 60 meters per minute.
7. (ORIGINAL) A method as claimed in claim 6, wherein the strip is moved away from the casting pool at a speed in the range 75 meters per minute.
8. (ORIGINAL) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the manganese content of the steel is in the range 0.55 to 0.9% by weight.


discrete projections in the presently claimed subject matter with a protective coating such that the casting surface shows the random distribution texture of the discrete projections.

Claims 20-21 are rejected under § 103 for obviousness over Strezov et al '948 in view of Irie et al '084 in view of JP '751 in view of JP '547. This rejection is traversed for all the reasons noted above. JP '547 is remote prior art. It is directed to the inner mold of a continuous slab casting machine where the inner surface of the mold is formed of **cobalt-molybdenum-copper** alloy. There is no disclosure or suggestion of utilizing a **nickel-chromium-molybdenum** alloy layer to form the mold surface as taught by claims 20 and 21.

As the Examiner indicated at the interview on May 21, 2004, applicants respectfully submit that pending claims 1-21 are in condition for allowance, and should be allowed. If the Examiner has any further questions or concerns, applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner telephone applicants' counsel, Arland T. Stein, Esq., at (317) 231-7390.

Respectfully,

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